

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 JUSE-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 COME-00

EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04

SIL-01 (ISO) W

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R 192034Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2903

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, CO

SUBJECT: LIBERAL PARTY DIVISIONS HARDEN

REF: BOGOTA 538

1. THE LIBERAL PARTY FACTION "FIRST FORCE" AS THREATENED (SEE REF), REFUSED TO ATTEND THE PARTY CONVENTION ON JAN 16, HAVING FAILED TO REACH PRIOR AGREEMENT WITH THE "TURBAYISTAS" ON THE MAKEUP OF THE PARTY'S NATIONAL DIRECTORATE (DNL). THE "TURBAYISTAS" MET AND REELECTED THE PREVIOUS DNL.

2. THE "FIRST FORCE" ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD NOT RECOGNIZE THE DNL, AND WOULD PRESENT ITS OWN LISTS OF CANDIDATES IN THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS, SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 18. FORMER PRESIDENT CARLOS LLERAS AND HIS FOLLOWERS HAD MADE A SIMILAR DECISION SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. THE DISUNITED LIBERAL PARTY WILL THUS HAVE THREE MAJOR FACTIONS AS WELL AS MINOR, REGIONAL GROUPS COMPETING FOR THE VOTES OF LIBERAL SUPPORTERS.

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3. THE "LLERISTAS", WHO HAVE BEEN CAMPAIGNING ACTIVELY SINCE MAY, HAVE CLEARLY GAINED BY THE FAILURE OF THE OTHER TWO MAJOR LIBERAL GROUPINGS TO AGREE, SINCE THE DISSIDENT "LLERISTAS" WILL NOT HAVE TO CONTEND WITH A DLN WHICH CAN CLAIM TO REPRESENT THE REST OF THE PARTY. AT THIS STAGE THE LEADERLESS "TURBAYISTAS" (AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. TURBAY HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THAT HE WOULD NOT RETURN TO COLOMBIA FOR THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS) AND "FIRST FORCE" (WHOSE MEMBERS HAVE BEEN TOLD BY PRESIDENT LOPEZ TO STOP CALLING THEMSELVES "LOPISTAS") MAY NOT BE CAPABLE OF MOUNTING AS EFFECTIVE A CAMPAIGN AS LLERAS, WHO HAS COMPLETELY COMMITTED HIS PRESTIGE AS AN EX-PRESIDENT, AS WELL AS HIS CONSIDERABLE ABILITIES, TO HIS CAMPAIGN.

4. THE LIBERALS WILL PROBABLY REUNITE IN TIME FOR THE 1977 PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATING CONVENTION. SHOULD LLERAS WIN BIG IN APRIL, HIS INFLUENCE IN THAT CONVENTION WILL BE GREATLY ENHANCED, SINCE LIBERALS ELECTED IN APRIL TO DEPARTMENTAL ASSEMBLIES AND CITY COUNCILS WILL ELECT HALF OF THE DELEGATES TO THE NOMINATING CONVENTION. MOST OF THE REMAINDER WILL BE CONGRESSMEN. VAKY

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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